

The Baptist Record

JOURNAL OF THE MISSISSIPPI BAPTIST CONVENTION

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Mission Mississippi embarking on third celebration

Mission Mississippi's 1995 Celebration of Reconciliation in Christ, featuring renowned pastor/speaker E.V. Hill; First Church, Jackson, pastor Frank Pollard; former gang leader Joseph Jennings; and Christian vocalist Kathy Troccoli will be held Oct. 18-19 in the Mississippi Coliseum in Jackson.

Mission Mississippi is an organization created to encourage and express unity in the body of Christ across racial and denominational lines, so that the message of Christ can be better seen across Mississippi, said Mission Mississippi Executive Director Jarvis Ward of Jackson.

"Our third annual rally features a blend of America's leading speakers and brightest contemporary Christian music talent with messages of reconciliation directed to the body of Christ in Mississippi,"



6'11", 280-pound stature.

Troccoli captured the hearts of Christian contemporary music lovers — and the top hits charts — with the "Everything Changes" single from her "Pure Attraction" album. She has appeared with Michael Bolton and Jay Leno, as well as on "The Tonight Show," "Entertainment Tonight," and "Live with Regis and Kathy Lee."

Worship and Unity Night will begin in the Mississippi Coliseum at 7 p.m. on Thursday, Oct. 19.

Featured speakers will be E.V. Hill, pastor of Mount Zion Missionary Baptist Church in Los Angeles, and his long-time friend Frank Pollard, pastor of First Church in Jackson.

Hill, who has pastored Mount Zion for 34 years, is hailed by *Time* magazine as "one of the most outstanding preachers in the United States." He is involved with the national Promise Keepers men's movement and is a senior policy advisor to the mayor of Los Angeles.

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Admission to the rallies is free.

"We invite Mississippi Christians of all denominations and races to join the body of

Ward reported.

Mission Mississippi Month has been proclaimed by Mississippi Governor Kirk Fordice, he added.

Youth Night, which kicks off in Mississippi Coliseum at 7 p.m. on Wednesday, Oct. 18, spotlights Jennings and Troccoli.

Jennings, a national anti-drug motivational speaker, came to Christ after 36 years of frustration and pain manifested in violent gang activity, drug addiction, and illicit sex. His powerful delivery is reinforced by his commanding

6'11", 280-pound stature.

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"We invite Mississippi Christians of all denominations and races to join the body of



Joseph Jennings

Christ in Mississippi and open their hearts to demonstrate the message of unity in Christ," Ward said.

Other Mission Mississippi projects on the calendar include:

— Oct. 1, 1995: Picnic/dinner on the

grounds at Smith Park in downtown Jackson beginning after church services. Ballet Magnificat and Youth Inspiration will perform.

— Dec. 7, 1995: Christmas Party at Galloway Memorial United Methodist Church in downtown Jackson.

— April 4, 1996: Co-sponsor of the annual Mayor's Prayer Breakfast in Jackson.

— May 2, 1996: National Day of Prayer service.

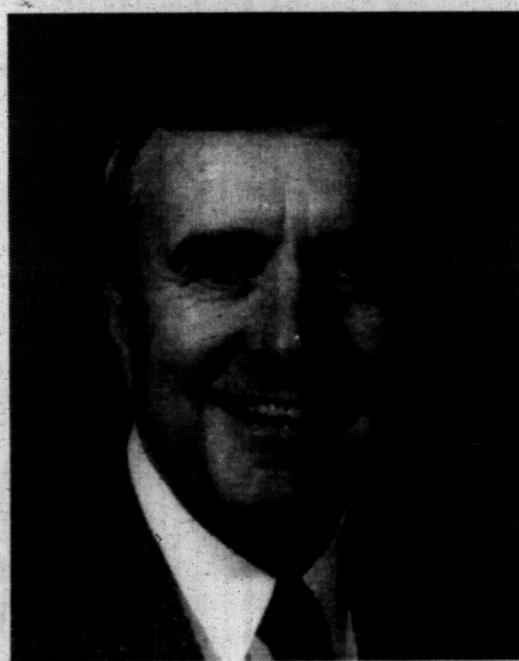
— May 25, 1996: City-wide March for Jesus in Jackson.

— June 20, 1996: "Two & Two Together" restaurant night.

— Oct. 20-21, 1996: Fourth annual Mission Mississippi rallies in Mississippi Coliseum, Jackson.

— 7 a.m. prayer meetings every Thursday from Oct. 5-Dec. 21, conducted in a number of Jackson churches of different denominations.

For more information, contact the Mission Mississippi office at (601) 353-6477.



Frank Pollard



E.V. Hill

Kathy Troccoli

Bulgarian conflict

The city government of Sofia, Bulgaria is attempting to take over property where Baptists are building a school, orphanage, and church, according to the European Baptist Press Service. The Baptist Union of Bulgaria and Sofia Baptist Church leased the property and began construction after the necessary permits were approved in 1993. However, The Commission for Education and Culture intervened after more than \$175,000 had been spent, claiming "Baptists will influence the orphans for which they care and so predetermine their fate," said Theo Angelov, president of the Baptist Union. Bulgarians enjoyed an explosion of Christianity after communism fell, but conversions have tapered as hysteria toward Baptists appears to be growing. News media often print negative rumors and articles with headlines such as, "Baptists Eat Babies for Breakfast." Although Baptists are historically grounded in the country, evangelical groups were devastated by imprisonment and political disappearances during the long, dark night of communist rule.

Big decision

Todd Burnett faced the decision of his life. The four-year starting quarterback for the University of North Carolina had a promising pro football career ahead of him, but felt God's call to the ministry. Actually, it wasn't such a hard decision to forsake football and enroll at Southern Seminary in Louisville, Ky., because he knew his first love and was aware of God's direction for his life. "I know why I'm here. This is where my heart is. This is where I can make my best contribution," he said. Burnett is so sure he is in God's will that he turned down tryout invitations from the Atlanta Falcons, San Diego Chargers, Phoenix Cardinals, and New England Patriots, as well as from teams in the Canadian and World Football leagues. Burnett's decision didn't surprise those close to him. "My friends knew my faith was important to me," he said. Burnett looks forward to a career as a marriage and family counselor. "A football career was alluring. It would have given me financial freedom. However, I'm doing what God wants me to do," he said.

Looking Back...

10 years ago

First Church, Hattiesburg, sponsors the first 10 kilometer (6.2 mile) "Run for World Hunger" run/walk event, in observance of the Southern Baptist Convention's annual emphasis on world hunger.

20 years ago

J. Clark Hensley, executive director of the Mississippi Baptist Christian Action Commission, receives the national 1975 Distinguished Service Award from the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission in Nashville.

50 years ago

The 1945 State Missions Offering will help fund 24 Negro Bible Institutes from Sardis to Gulfport for the purpose of training interested workers and delivering gospel tracts for distribution in the Negro community.

EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK

Guy Henderson

Customers or patients?

Shopping is a growing habit. Holidays and special days are now consumed with buying and selling. Spendaholics are running wild. The hidden "addiction of the '90s," according to *We are Driven* by Robert Hemfelt, Frank Minirth, and Paul Meier, is shopping. They call it the "Compulsive behavior which America applauds, most of it motivated by the need to do more and be more."

It is the "splurge generation," according to writer Tom Wolfe. Are we that obvious? Have we been liberated from a tight-fisted fiscal policy and now race through the malls like the proverbial blind dog in a meat house? The closets are full, trunks are bulging, and we have enough laid up for rainy days to withstand a flood of Noahian proportion.

Have we grown fat on the economic good times of the '80s, self-indulgent to a point of materialistic obesity? The shopaholic goes shopping every day, and friends don't let friends miss an opportunity. Price tags are still on

purchases made months ago, and we are about ready to tear down barns and build greater barns.

The average woman is said to carry 10 credit cards in her purse. In 1970 only 10% of college business degrees were granted to women; today 40% of business graduates are women. Our nation has the applause meter hot for "risk-takers."

"Just can't help it; it's a bargain, I must have one." We are obsessed, can't shake it, controlled mentally and emotionally by the price tag. Figure out some day the percentage of your daily newspaper given over to advertisement and percentage of news.

Advertisement is the secular call to worship, and much of the nation flocks to the malls. Six days is not enough; we bow before this god seven days a week. After all, "You only live once, let's go for it."

The Minirth-Meier clinic says it has catalogued 51 areas of this affliction. It ranges from money matters/health, work and play, service/volunteerism, relationships,

and perfectionism, to sun-tanning.

"Lite food," low fat, "thin is in," is a billion dollar business, and we still weigh the same. We have wall-to-wall exercise equipment, and hopefully we feel better as we wear out the carpet — of all places — in the mall. There is a "self-improvement" mania feeding on 60,000 workshops and seminars, and we feel the need to participate in all of them to the tune of \$4 billion per year.

Indeed we are driven to do more, be more, and buy more. It's not all bad, but when we get to the place where we can't help it, where it dominates our lives and gets a powerful hold on Americans' purses and wallets, then it's time to do some serious thinking. Happiness and fulfillment has never come by the abundance of things you possess. The early believers were reminded to "let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee."

Guest Opinion...

Your children aren't possessed; they're teens, therapist says

By Charles Willis

GLORIETA, N.M. (BP) — The most emotionally intense ages of adolescence — 13 to 15 — may lead some parents to wonder if their children are possessed by evil forces, a child and family therapist joked with music ministers and their spouses during Church Music Leadership Week July 8-14, sponsored by the Baptist Sunday School Board's Music Department at Glorieta (N.M.) Conference Center.

"We can walk out of a hospital with a newborn child and not have to have any sort of license, like we do for cars and other things," observed Barry McCarty, a therapist in private practice and member of South Main Church in Houston.

While a license to steer teenagers might sound appealing to parents who are frustrated with unpredictable, uncharacteristic behavior from a once-loving child, church staff parents may well have a more difficult time with their teens.

The pressures associated with being part of a church staff family can bring incredible social, emotional, spiritual, and intellectual

pressure on a teen who felt the need for super performance before physical and emotional changes began.

"It can make them more rebellious, or the rebellion may be put off and emerge later," McCarty observed.

"Watch where they are stressed out," he urged. "We need to cut our expectations, telling teen-agers, 'You can't be perfect at everything. We want to take the pressure off of you.' Encourage them to choose one area in which to excel, and if other things can be done with enjoyment, continue those without the pressure to be perfect."

"We have to model that, too," he told church musicians. "We have to decline requests. It may be in your best interest to respond to a request by saying, 'To be true to myself and my family, I have to say no.'"

McCarty said parents need to be aware of the stressors they bring into the family, including job dissatisfaction or other church-related problems. These can add to the stressors affecting teen behavior.

"You will see their worst behavior," he said. "The good news is, they are saving their best behavior for friends, school, and church."

Among the factors affecting teens, according to McCarty, are:

- hormones going crazy, coupled with tremendous physical growth.

- intense feelings.

- a radically changing body and self-image.

- increased sensitivity to peer opinion/pressure.

- a school format changed from one teacher to several, along with a range of different subjects.

- feelings of insecurity and extreme self-criticism.

- sexual thoughts that both frighten and excite.

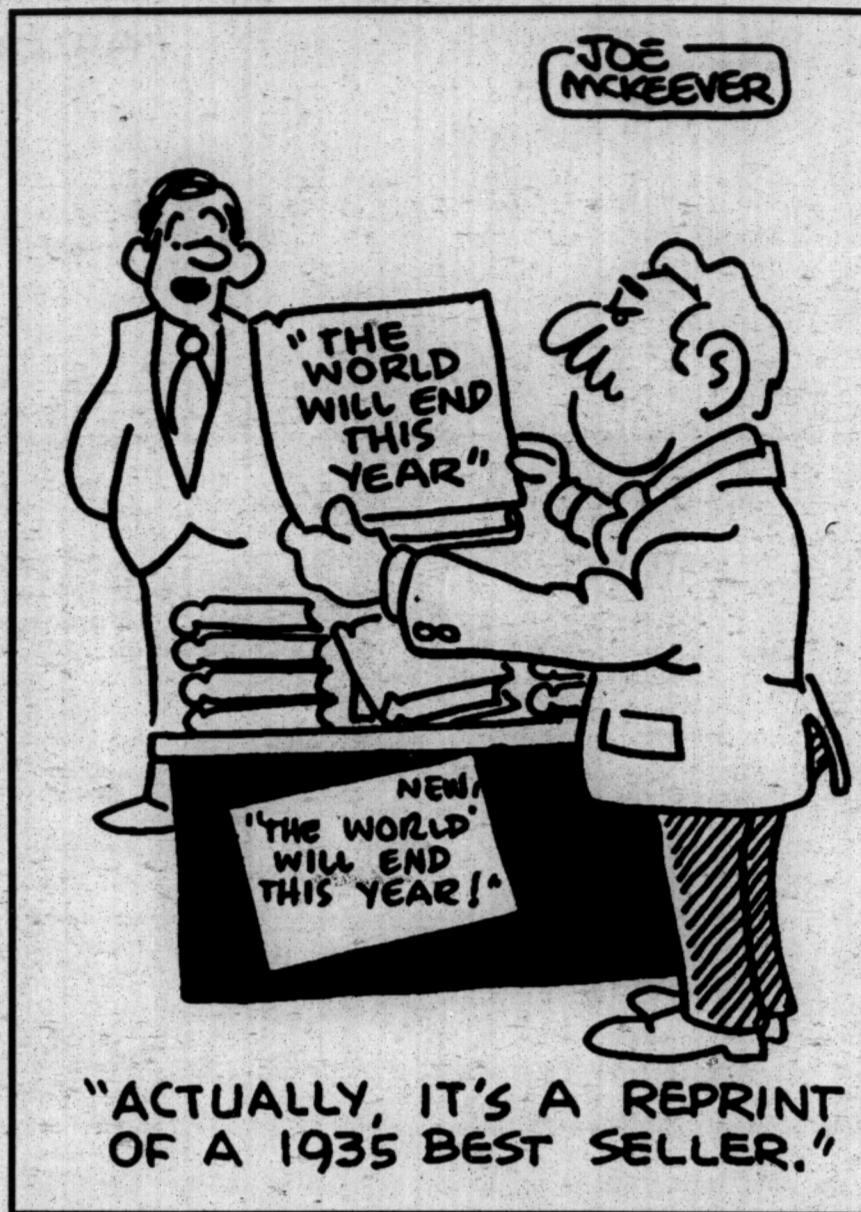
- fantasies about romance.

- girls are already adult size and shape, while some boys are mature and others are clumsy.

- in many ways, they are still children.

- slights and rejections are a big deal.

McCarty offered several suggestions to help harried parents survive their teen's



THE FRAGMENTS

Not worth a penny

Some parsimonious sage has observed the difference between the older and young generations: the older group will stoop to pick up a penny. A penny is not worth much today; just think, we even had tokens back in the '40s. They are actually trying to do away with pennies and let the nickel be our smallest medium of exchange.

How precious were the pennies when I was a lad. Back then, you could buy a "penny Baby Ruth." To me, it was a treat. I visualized the day when I would be grown with plenty of money and would

buy all the penny Baby Ruths I could eat. What a shame, now that I can afford them, it, I can't eat them.

An ancient almanac declared that "if you want to know what God thinks of money, look at the people he gives it to." A witty expression, but it is little consolation to a boy hungry for penny Baby Ruths.

It's not unlike the words of a rich man who said, "It is very difficult to understand why people who want dinner do not ring the bell."

— GH

transition toward adulthood:

- try not to take their moods personally.

- break through their walls with humor and games.

- have adult conversations.

- treat them as adults, but expect them to act like children.

- compliment them on their mature moments.

- don't expect them to be part parent to younger siblings.

- think of creative ways for them to pay off mistakes.

- cut them some slack; don't confront every behavioral

infraction.

- do not give up.

"Don't build your lives around your teenagers. Invest in peer relationships," he urged. "It is important to have old and new friendships. Have dinner with another couple and agree not to discuss your children for at least two hours."

"Go for rides to get away from the house and the teenagers," he advised. "In a few years they'll be doing that to you."

Willis writes for the Baptist Sunday School Board, Nashville.

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Pontotoc educator fires back after Herdahl's Senate appearance

By William H. Perkins Jr.

The Pontotoc County mother whose federal lawsuit put an end to morning devotionals over a local school intercom isn't telling the whole story and "continues to mischaracterize the facts," said county schools superintendent Jerry L. Horton in a statement released Sept. 20.

Horton's statement was issued after Lisa Herdahl, mother of five children at North Pontotoc Attendance Center, testified before the U.S. Senate Judiciary Committee Sept. 12 that she and her family have been threatened and harassed since she filed the lawsuit on Dec. 20, 1994, with the assistance of the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) and People for the American Way.

"Just a few short weeks ago Mrs. Herdahl, the ACLU, and the People for the American Way dropped their demand for monetary damages. If Mrs. Herdahl

continues to believe that harassment occurred, one wonders why she went along with her attorneys to drop the request for monetary damages," Horton asked.

The superintendent took particular issue with a letter he said Herdahl displayed at the Senate hearing that allegedly contained a death threat. He said she "intimated" she had been threatened by the people of Pontotoc County.

"What Mrs. Herdahl didn't tell the Senate committee is that the letter came from a city in another state over 300 miles from Pontotoc County. This is a classic example of how Mrs. Herdahl, the ACLU, and the People for the American Way fail to tell the whole story," Horton said.

Horton is also frustrated over Herdahl's apparent inability to identify people who have confronted the family over the lawsuit.

Life Chain set for Oct. 1

On Sunday, Oct. 1, from 2:30-3:30 p.m., Life Chain will be held near the intersection of State and High Streets in Jackson, simultaneous with Life Chains in other areas across the state.

Life Chain is an opportunity for persons across the state to peacefully and legally show solidarity against abortion. The Christian Action Commission (CAC) of the Mississippi Baptist Convention is working with other Christian denominations and churches to present a quiet, visible statement decrying abortion.

Life Chain involves persons who stand along public roads and streets in areas approved by local authorities and silently hold signs which read "Abortion Kills Children."

Over 300 Life Chain events are planned across the nation on National Life Chain Sunday, Oct. 1.

Life Chain began in 1987 in Yuba, Calif.; by February 1991, over 170 had been held in 40 states and several foreign countries.

CAC urges local churches to plan to be involved in this statement against abortion. Southern Baptist churches or individuals from any area of the state who desire to be involved can secure information by contacting the CAC at (601) 968-3800 or toll-free outside Jackson (800) 748-1651.

Agency heads hold talks, agree on missions priority

NASHVILLE (BP) — Heads of the Foreign Mission Board (FMB) and the Woman's Missionary Union (WMU) said they have met privately and agreed to get on with the task of missions.

Jerry Rankin, FMB president, and Dellanna O'Brien, WMU executive director-treasurer, met Sept. 16 in Birmingham, Ala., in an attempt to restore the close working relationship the two executives and agencies have enjoyed for many years, they told Baptist Press Sept. 19 during the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) Executive Committee meeting both attended in Nashville.

Although they basically have "agreed to disagree" on the matter of WMU's printing of Cooperative Baptist Fellowship (CBF) mission materials, the two executives both emphasized the need to strengthen their longtime partnership.

A dispute between the two leaders emerged recently when Rankin sent a letter to all Southern Baptist pastors and church WMU

leaders asking them to pray that the decision by the WMU to print and distribute CBF mission materials would be reversed. A sharp exchange between the two leaders made media headlines.

The CBF is a four-year-old organization of Southern Baptists critical of SBC leadership.

The Birmingham meeting also included Don Kammerdiener, FMB executive vice president, and Carolyn D. Miller, WMU president.

"We're friends, always have been," Rankin told Baptist Press. "Dellanna and I are very close friends; I have a deep respect for her."

O'Brien said she was grateful for Rankin and Kammerdiener to come to Birmingham. Every family has disputes and arguments, O'Brien said, but it is "incumbent upon us" to work through the disagreement and get on with the "important task of missions."

Both were reluctant to provide further details of the four-hour meeting.

"School officials have repeatedly asked Mrs. Herdahl and her children to give the names of students and teachers who have harassed her and her family. The reply is always something to the effect, 'I don't know his name,' or 'It came from a crowd,' or 'I didn't see the person.'

"The fact of the matter is that Mrs. Herdahl's children are well-liked and accepted by the student body. One child was elected class favorite. Another child is a member of the football team and is well-liked and accepted by his teammates," Horton said.

Herdahl's husband has stated under oath that he and his children have been treated well by the school and the community, and that he had no personal knowledge of harassment, the superintendent pointed out.

"The allegations of harassment are simply unsubstantiated," Horton said.

"Since the court injunction back in April 1995, the only student speech that is prohibited at North Pontotoc Attendance Center is speech of a religious nature on the (public address) system. The position represented by the ACLU and

the People for the American Way seems to be one of extreme narrow-mindedness. They have consistently tried to intimidate students and parents who have tried to express deeply-held religious beliefs in the public arena.

"The charges of abuse and harassment that have been leveled against our school district are false and unfair," Horton said.

Horton is a member of Ecru Baptist Church and a former Mississippi legislator in his first term as the elected superintendent of Pontotoc County Schools, located in the northeast part of the state.

THE SECOND FRONT PAGE

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Mississippi proposes CP increase; funds to stay in state for missions

By Herb Hollinger

NASHVILLE (BP) — The Mississippi Baptist Convention executive board has proposed a 2.98% increase for the state's 1996 Cooperative Program (CP) budget, a proposal that will keep the Southern Baptist Convention's (SBC) portion of the increase for mission work in Mississippi.

However, gifts in 1995 over the basic budget will allow the state to forward enough additional funds in 1996 to the SBC to make up the difference.

The proposed \$23,280,983 budget is 2.98% above the 1995 budget of \$22,606,589. According to Mississippi officials, the portion of the budget forwarded to the SBC Cooperative Program would remain at 37% but Mississippi would keep the actual increase in dollars from last year sent to the SBC.

In 1995, Mississippi budgeted to send the SBC \$8,364,434, or 37% of the budget. The proposed plan for 1996 would send the same dollar amount to the SBC as in 1995 and keep the 2.68% increase, or \$249,530, in Mississippi. In actuality, that would have meant Mississippi would be sending slightly under 36% of its 1996 budget to the SBC Cooperative Program, a decrease of more than 1% from 1995. However, officials said the state's gifts in 1995 should reach the challenge portion of the budget which would allow about \$250,000 to flow to the SBC, matching the amount of the increase.

The executive board's proposal was approved Aug. 29, with the budget slated for final approval by messengers to the Mississippi Baptist Convention, Oct. 31-Nov. 1 in Jackson.

Mississippi officials said the \$249,530 represents the approximate amount which the SBC Home Mission Board (HMB) returns to Mis-

sissippi for joint state-HMB projects. Each of those projects is funded 60% by Mississippi and 40% by the HMB.

Mississippi convention executive director Bill Causey told the state board home missions work is still in the 37% going to SBC causes.

"We're showing it this way because we're trying to be completely open," Causey said. "Mississippi is going to take care of Mississippi and will contribute to the HMB for other areas."

Budget committee chairman Robert Upchurch of Tupelo, said the SBC asked the old-line states to allow HMB to direct its efforts toward pioneer states.

"This (new way of allocating the budget) does not mean any pulling away or any expression of being uncooperative," Upchurch told the board's executive committee in the August meeting.

Larry L. Lewis, president of the SBC's Home Mission Board, told Baptist Press he had been assured (Mississippi) will not reduce either the dollar amount or percent of CP funds sent to Nashville (where CP dollars are distributed to the SBC agencies) for national and worldwide missions. He said he wanted to make two points "very clear."

"First, we intend to maintain a cooperative agreement with Mississippi and all other states regardless of funding arrangements. Any partnership based solely on money is weak. Our cooperative agreements with state conventions are based on

a desire to reach our nation for Jesus Christ. We will work together to set priorities and meet mission needs whether or not funding is involved.

The HMB and Mississippi have not yet completed a new cooperative agreement that will address a number of unresolved issues, especially how our jointly funded missions personnel in Mississippi might be handled. These missionaries were jointly called, assigned, and funded and, of course, neither party will attempt to unilaterally assume full responsibility.

"Secondly, the HMB has a national assignment from the SBC to ensure priority mission needs are met across the U.S., its territories and Canada. No SBC agency, state convention, or association can claim exclusive responsibility for Southern Baptist mission work in a particular area. The HMB reserves the right to address unmet mission need whether in partnership or directly," Lewis said.

SBC Cooperative Program gifts from the state conventions are received by the Nashville office of the Executive Committee and then disbursed to SBC agencies according to a SBC-approved Program and Allocation Budget.

The proposal by Mississippi follows a proposed reduction of 2.5% (\$1.5 million) to the SBC Cooperative Program by Texas in 1996 and a proposed 2% reduction by Oklahoma.

Hollinger is vice president for Convention Press.

Forms available for '96 SBC meeting

Housing guides and request forms for the 1996 Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting are available by calling the office of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board executive director-treasurer at (601) 968-3800 or toll-free outside Jackson (800) 748-1651. The meeting will be held in New Orleans, June 11-13, 1996.



New Southern trustee

Odean W. Puckett (right), pastor of First Church, Natchez, and president of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, is greeted by Southern Seminary President R. Albert Mohler during an orientation meeting for new trustees on the seminary's Louisville, Ky., campus. Puckett was recently appointed to the Southern Seminary board of trustees by Southern Baptist Convention President Jim Henry, pastor of First Church, Orlando, Fla. (Southern Seminary photo by Gibbs Frazer)

U.N.-Beijing document disturbs pro-family reps

WASHINGTON (BP) — The World Conference on Women, plagued by controversy before and during its 12-day run in Beijing, China, closed with a Platform for Action apparently much more satisfactory to ardent feminists than to advocates of the traditional family.

The 150-page, non-binding document was adopted Sept. 15 on the final day of the United Nations-sponsored conference by delegates from 185 countries, but 42 countries and the Vatican registered reservations.

While portions of the document's final version generally remain a mystery, pro-family organizations know enough about it to describe the "good and necessary" in the text as "overshadowed by the negative," a pro-family spokesperson said.

Before representatives of United States pro-family organizations left Beijing, they described their grave disappointment at a news conference, said Susie Sanguinetti of Focus on the Family.

The consensus among pro-family groups was the document is guilty of "ignoring marriage" and "minimizing the importance of motherhood," said Sanguinetti, Focus' manager for international media who was in Beijing. They also believed the document "encouraged sexual promiscuity" and "weakened the authority of parents," she said.

The pro-family representatives

especially were displeased with the agenda of the U.S. delegation, which unsuccessfully pushed for inclusion of homosexuals as a class deserving civil rights protection but stayed in the background while delegations from other industrialized countries pushed other provisions opposed by pro-family organizations, the Vatican delegation, and delegations from Muslim and heavily Catholic countries.

U.S. delegation members "were not subdued" in their efforts to use other countries such as the European Union and Canada as surrogates, said Nancy Schaefer, who represented the Christian Life Commission at Beijing.

It was clear "that what America is exporting to other countries through social positions and policies is a travesty," said Schaefer, a CLC trustee and a member of First Church, Atlanta, in a written statement. "Many delegates [were] quick to say, 'We don't want your social programs, such as sex education in our schools.'"

Especially damaging in the final document was its language on children's rights, which were given priority at the expense of parental rights and responsibilities. The document comes close to saying juveniles have a right to sexual health, which could include abortion, contraceptives, and sex education, said Bob Ditmer, who reported from Beijing for the Family News in Focus radio network.

According to pro-family representatives in Beijing, the "Platform for Action" document:

- ignores marriage
- minimizes the importance of motherhood
- encourages sexual promiscuity
- weakens the authority of parents

Task force named to steer SBC's restructuring plan

NASHVILLE (ABP) — A 10-member task force has been appointed to implement the massive restructuring of Southern Baptist Convention agencies approved by messengers to this year's SBC annual meeting.

Bob Reccord, pastor of First Church of Norfolk, Va., will chair the committee, which includes one woman and one Hispanic. The seven-member Program and Structure Study Committee, which proposed the restructuring, had been criticized for having no black, ethnic, or female representation.

Ronnie Floyd, chairman of the SBC Executive Committee and a member of the Program and Structure Study Committee, nominated the implementation task force, which was approved by the SBC Executive Committee Sept. 18 without dissent or discussion.

The next day, the Executive Committee elected David Hankins, a Louisiana pastor and former Executive Committee chairman, to the new staff position of vice president for convention policy. Hankins will carry the primary staff responsibility for implementing the restructuring, which is expected to take several years.

Other members of the implementation task force are Michael Hamlet, pastor of North Spartanburg First Church in Spartanburg, S.C.; Rudy Hernandez, a vocational evangelist from Grand Prairie, Texas; Bill Hogue, retired executive director of the California Southern Baptist Convention; Sarah Maddox, a women's ministry consultant from Nashville; T.C. Pinckney, retired U.S. Air Force general from Alexandria, Va.; Joe Reynolds, an attorney from Houston; Ted Warren, executive vice president and chief operating officer of the Baptist Sunday School Board; Don Wills, a businessman from Dallas; and John Yarbrough, pastor of First Church in Perry, Ga.

Four members of the task force also are members of the SBC Exec-

utive Committee, which has ultimate responsibility for implementing the restructuring. They are Reccord, Pinckney, Reynolds, and Yarbrough.

The restructuring, called Covenant for a New Century, will consolidate 19 SBC agencies into 12 by dissolving several entities and merging others. The most far-reaching change will be a merger of the Home Mission Board, Brotherhood Commission, and Radio and Television Commission into a new North American Mission Board.

Floyd described the purpose of the implementation task force as being "to analyze, study, and take actions necessary, including monitoring the transitional actions of all Southern Baptist Convention entities to facilitate the orderly and timely transitions approved by the Southern Baptist Convention in adopting the Covenant for a New Century."

Although trustee boards of the Home Mission Board, Brotherhood Commission, and Radio and Television Commission have appointed their own transition teams — reportedly with the hope of having some influence over the merger of their agencies — Floyd's document makes no provision for any formal input from these trustee committees. Nor did it say how potential conflicts between agencies' trustees and the task force will be resolved.

Floyd did note that the implementation task force "may choose to call upon other Southern Baptists, professional groups, or individual specialists and consultants to assist them in their responsibilities."

Three of the six broad areas of responsibility Floyd outlined for the implementation task force carry instructions to "develop and propose for consideration by elected trustees" certain things. The other three areas apparently will be handled entirely by the implementation task force and Executive Committee.

The six broad responsibilities

Floyd has assigned to the implementation task force are:

— Legal issues, such as dissolution of charters for the Brotherhood Commission, Education Commission, Historical Commission, Stewardship Commission, Home Mission Board, and Radio and Television Commission, as well as development of a new charter for the North American Mission Board and revision of charters for the renamed International Mission Board and the Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission.

— Financial issues, such as obtaining cost analyses of relocating the Radio and Television Commission and Brotherhood Commission to Atlanta, of relocating personnel, and of reducing the total number of SBC trustees.

— Physical assets, such as determining what to do with the property, buildings, furnishing and fixtures owned by the Radio and Television Commission, Brotherhood Commission, Home Mission Board, Education Commission, Historical Commission, Stewardship Commission, Southern Baptist Foundation, and Commission on the American Baptist Seminary, which are being eliminated or merged.

— Financial assets, including proposing what to do with the operating capital, endowment funds, investments, and financial liabilities of the entities being dissolved or merged.

— Personnel issues, such as developing a compensation plan for employees whose positions are discontinued, paying insurance premiums for retirees of entities being dissolved, paying relocation expenses for personnel asked to move, and providing career transition support for employees displaced by the restructuring.

— Ministry assignments, including monitoring the implementation of new ministry assignments already outlined in the restructuring plan, and proposing changes in ministry statements as necessary.

Schaefer meets with Beijing delegates, protests, and has credentials confiscated

BEIJING (BP) — The Southern Baptist representative in China's capital city for the World Conference on Women expressed pro-family and pro-life concerns to members of the United States delegation Sept. 11 but was stripped of her conference credentials the next day after a demonstration during a U.S. briefing.

At the close of a Sept. 12 afternoon press briefing by the U.S. delegation, Nancy Schaefer, representing the Christian Life Commission, and six other women raised a banner which read "U.S. Delegation Ignores Pro-family Women." A United Nations security guard escorted them to a holding room, where he confiscated their badges, took photographs of the badges, and instructed the women to return the next morning, Schaefer said in a written statement.

The women did not receive their badges Sept. 13, however, said a staff member of an Atlanta-based ministry, Family Concerns Inc., founded by Schaefer.

Schaefer, who is a CLC trustee, and the other women decided to unfurl a banner after they were dissatisfied with the U.S. delegation's agenda and its response to pro-family concerns expressed

in the Sept. 11 meeting.

On behalf of 21 organizations, Schaefer had written a letter Sept. 8 to Madeleine Albright, U.S. ambassador to the U.N. and head of the U.S. delegation, asking for a meeting. Among the groups signing onto the letter were Focus on the Family, Eagle Forum, Concerned Women for America, American Life League, and the National Association of Evangelicals.

The U.S. delegation defended the inclusion of "sexual orientation" in the document and opposed efforts to define it, Diane Knippers of the Institute on Religion and Democracy said in a written statement. The delegation also resisted defining family and said homosexual marriages had not been discussed, Knippers said.

"When I left the office of the U.S. delegation, the words ringing in my ears were: 'We don't define terms,'" Schaefer said. "If they don't define terms, how can they possibly expect 186 nations to join in signing onto their concepts unless these countries are going to be bullied into accepting it by linking their approval to financial aid?"

Exec. Committee adds v.p., addresses SBC matters

NASHVILLE (BP) — A welcome back was extended to David E. Hankins when the Executive Committee elected its former chairman to the new position of vice president for convention policy.

The new vice president also will provide staff leadership to the Executive Committee bylaws workgroup; coordinate a denominational planning process for the 21st century; provide staff assistance to assigned standing and special committees of the SBC and Executive Committee; and review governing documents of the SBC and its entities to determine when changes should be considered.

Morris H. Chapman, Executive Committee president, in an address to the Executive Committee, reminded, "God has brought us to a time of transition."

The 10-member implementation task force created by the Executive Committee Sept. 18 "will be called upon to make some hard decisions," Chapman said. "But I believe they will come with a genuine care, understanding that transition represents for some more than others uncertainty, unawareness, perhaps fear. And it would be the commitment of this Executive Committee and the implementation task force and all who are involved to work with our brothers and sisters in all of our organizations in Southern Baptist life to bring about an orderly, but timely transition, trusting that he will give us wisdom daily, weekly, monthly to do what we do for his glory — on occasions disagreeing — and yet believing that God's hand is in it all."

In other action during its two-day meeting, the Executive Committee:

— authorized the committee's officers to employ a new vice president for convention relations prior to the Executive Committee's next regular meeting when a vote to affirm the individual will be slated. The post has been vacant since Mark Coppenger became president of Midwestern Seminary during the summer.

— revised its policy for exhibit space at the SBC annual meeting to make sure "each entity granted exhibit space is consistent with the Mission Statement of the Southern Baptist Convention and does not condone the use of alcoholic beverages in its programs or on its properties."

— received requests from the current 19 SBC agencies and the Baptist World Alliance for the 1996-97 Program Allocation Budget totaling \$150,809,379. According to policy, the 1996-97 budget will be based on Cooperative Program receipts in the 1994-95 fiscal year, which ends Sept. 30 and is projected to be more than \$145 million. The requests ranged from the Foundation's 2.5% increase to the Stewardship Commission's 40.9% increase. The Executive Committee requested a 1996-97 SBC Operating Budget of \$3,415,254, an increase of 6.28%.

— declined action on a motion referred from the 1995 annual meeting for using investment assets of SBC agencies to further the convention's moral views, with the

Executive Committee noting: "... while the Executive Committee agrees with the recommendation as a moral issue, only a small percent of investment assets have proxy votes, and after considering equity holdings of all agencies and cumulative voting possibilities on those holdings, the effect of directing the votes on those shares is so minuscule as to be ineffective."

— approved a Radio and Television Commission fund-raising campaign for up to \$350,000 annually for its "Covenant" effort to promote Christian values in the media.

— responded to a motion encouraging all SBC agencies to make more promotional literature available in Spanish, saying it has done so. To a motion encouraging all agencies to use closed captioning in their video materials, the Executive Committee responded that it will consider doing so "whenever the target audience justifies closed captioning and it is deemed to be financially feasible."

In miscellaneous action, the Executive Committee approved three new Baptist Sunday School Board publications: a men's devotional magazine; a home-oriented magazine for neighborhood outreach by churches; and a devotional magazine for young adults, ages 26-34.

To other referrals from the 1995 SBC annual meeting, the Executive Committee:

— responded to a motion calling for an Executive Committee review of the Covenant for a New Century SBC-wide restructuring in light of financial and ministry impact and report to the SBC as soon as possible and not later than the 1996 convention, with the committee saying such a study is part of the work of the implementation task force it authorized in its Sept. 18 session.

— responded to a motion that the Executive Committee seek ways to include all Southern Baptists in the fellowship and work of the convention, saying, "... while not all interested Southern Baptists can serve on Convention boards or committees at any given time, no Southern Baptists are excluded from the fellowship and work of the Convention except through the provisions of the SBC constitution's article III titled, 'Membership.'"

— declined action on a proposed amendment to SBC bylaw 16 to identify spouses of church and denominational employees as church and denominational employees and to bylaw 16(5) to prohibit employees of Convention entities from recommending nominees to their own board of trustees.

— declined action on a motion that the SBC publish a national Southern Baptist Convention paper, with the Executive Committee stating it is concentrating "on getting SBC LIFE established as a widely read chronicle of Southern Baptist Convention mission, nature, contemporary issues, and accomplishments."

— referred to the Committee on Order of Business a motion calling for the SBC to include more time

for question-and-answer conferences between messengers and leaders.

— declined action on a motion calling for the maker of a motion referred by the SBC to be given opportunity for input and be notified of the disposition of the motion, with the Executive Com-

mittee responding that the maker of a motion, with knowledge of the process of referral, may already initiate at any time communication with the entity to which the motion has been referred.

— continued study of a referred motion to amend the SBC bylaws to permit the convention to act on

referred motions at the time they are reported to the convention, with the committee slated a review of the matter during its February meeting.

— declined action on a motion to amend the SBC mission statement to begin with the words, "In obedience to the divine will of our Heavenly Father...."

'96 Winter Bible Study, cantata focus on Old Testament's Amos

The Old Testament book of Amos will be the subject of the 1996 Winter Bible Study training session on Tuesday, Oct. 10, 1995, in Fellowship Hall West at First Church, Jackson. The session will begin at 9:30 a.m. and adjourn at 3:30 p.m. It is designed for pastors, church staff members, and others who will teach the study in their churches.

Waylor Bailey, pastor of First Church, Covington, La., will be the adult leadership

leader. Ken Parker, curriculum product development specialist for the Baptist Sunday School Board in Nashville, will be the youth leadership leader.

In addition, Mississippi Baptist musicians led by the Church Music Department of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board (MBCB) will perform a new cantata entitled, "Amos."

Bailey has served as pastor of First Church,

Covington, La., since 1989. He has been the J. Wash Watts Professor of Old Testament and Hebrew at New Orleans Seminary since 1978. Bailey has published three books and is currently writing the *New American Commentary* sections on the Old Testament books of Nahum, Habakkuk, and Zephaniah.

Texas native Parker holds the master of divinity degree from Southwestern Seminary in Fort Worth and served for

five years as associate pastor of Richey Street Church in Pasadena, Texas.

No reservation is necessary for the Amos study, sponsored by the MBCB Sunday School Department. Lunch will be served compliments of that department.

For more information, contact Larry Salter, Sunday School Department, at (601) 968-3800, or toll-free outside Jackson (800) 748-1651.

Amos is... the Winter Bible Study book for 1996.

Amos is... a Judah shepherd called by God to prophesy against the Northern Kingdom of Israel and its king, Jeroboam II.

Amos is... preaching God's judgment against wicked rich people and their exploitation of the poor for personal profit.

Amos is... horrified by the sexual and alcoholic debaucheries that the Israelites call "worship."

Amos is... hated by his own

people in Judah for also announcing their sins.

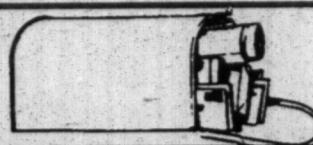
Amos is... prophesying the utter destruction and bitter mourning of the Israelites as they fall into captivity.

Amos is... holding out the hope that God will restore the children of Israel when the captives are allowed to return to their own land.

— Based on text by M. Pierce Matheny, professor of Old Testament and Hebrew, Midwestern Seminary in Kansas City.



The Mississippi College Naturals are again preparing to tour Mississippi and surrounding states to provide wholesome family entertainment with their high-energy musical variety performances. Under the direction of Robbie Lloyd Bell, producer, and Eva Aultman Hart, musical director, they appear on behalf of MC and the state of Mississippi for functions ranging from civic banquets to festivals and churches. They will perform on Oct. 22 at 3 p.m. in Swor Auditorium on the MC campus during MC's homecoming festivities. Members of the Naturals are: Wendy Hardin of Moss Point; David Moore of Columbus; Robert Mayfield of Natchez; Jon Charles Taggart of West Point; Heather Ash of Clinton; Todd Mitchell of Brandon; Mark Sellers of Tylertown; Scarlett Clanton of Purvis; Shelly Fairchild of Clinton; Steven Nixon of Clinton; Michael Alfred of Harvey, La.; and Alana Rushing of Clinton.



Letters to the editor



Looking to MBC

Editor:

We are only a few short weeks away from the 160th session of the Mississippi Baptist Convention. I would like to express my appreciation to Mississippi Baptists for giving me the opportunity to serve these past two years as the state president. The assignment has been both challenging and rewarding. I sought to be a good steward of the trust that was placed in me. I hope I have given back something to a faith family that has molded and shaped my life and ministry.

I would encourage churches to elect messengers and attend this year's session. This year we will elect new officers, transact other kingdom business, and be challenged by experiences of worship.

I would ask those planning to attend this convention to pack a spirit of love. And in the meantime, pray that God will fall on us in a unique and marvelous way. Let's continue to lead the way in letting the world and our faith family know that we are Christians by our focus on Jesus and our love for each other.

Rex Yancey, pastor
First Church, Pascagoula
President, MBC

Tribute to Bakers

Editor:

This is a tribute to our role models for ministry, Bill R. and Jill Baker. Bill and "Miss Jill" have been very close to my wife's family for over 35 years, the Alonzo Skeltons of Mantee, where they served in their first pastorate.

They have distinguished themselves in ministry for over 40 years as a "youth team," in pastorates, in music, and as leaders in Mississippi Baptist life. [Bill] moved to First Church, Columbia, as youth minister, then FBC, Gulfport, where he served with Landrum Leavell II as youth minister. He then distinguished himself in the pastorates of Mantee; FBC, Calhoun City; and for nearly 25 years as pastor of FBC, Clinton.

We just wanted to say in a small way how we love and appreciate the Bakers, for their having graced our lives with joy and blessings untold.

Ben and Laura Leigh James
Toomsula

Evils in the land

Editor:

Our Lord and Savior told the disciples that they were the salt of the earth. But if the salt of the earth loses its savor, it will be trodden under foot. Our forefathers founded and organized the greatest nation, the United States of America. They organized it under the laws, rules, and regulations of Almighty God. They also decreed that the nation functioned under the Lord's precepts. But when Earl Warren took charge of the Supreme Court of the United

States the devil and his henchmen began to pollute this great land.

And America's salt of the earth began to lose its savor. I am not talking about just Baptists. I am talking about every soul who's been saved. Things have grown from bad to worse until today we have the greatest number of illegitimacy, the greatest number of men and women living together without marriage licenses, the greatest of number of rapes, and the greatest number of murders.

Since the legalization of abortion, three times as many babies have been killed as soldiers in all the wars that America has been engaged in. To say that a mother has the right to murder her own baby is absurd. [It is] said that if God fails to punish us he would certainly have to apologize to Sodom and Gomorrah. When the rich man who was clothed in purple and fine linen lifted up his eyes in hell, he saw Lazarus afar off in Abraham's bosom. When the Supreme Court justices who legalized abortion lift up their eyes they will see precious girl and boy babies strangling to death. What a horrible sight to see. Who is responsible for all of this? You and I!

Atwell Scott
Coldwater

Worried about state

Editor:

The "Editor's Notebook" Sept. 7 was of real interest to me in many ways. First, the fact that you recognized that our state needs mission work. I have for 15 or more years worried about our state. Seems everyone wants to do big things by going off some other place and let the people next door do the best they can. If we people don't win our neighbors, help them, and get them in church, we have failed our community, state, and nation. There are so many people now that never think of going to church.

Now, for my complaint. The churches claim they have to compete with the school activities and the world to try and hold our young people. We are organized to death. The young people and parents are pushed to a terrible degree. Therefore, all these organizations are becoming just routine and don't mean a thing to them when it comes to real spiritual growth. The family never has any time together. The children are missing much to not have time at home and time to be more with their grandparents. Children learn so much from older people if the older people are Christian. Yes, the churches, the state [convention] and Southern Baptists are too highly-organized. So much control is getting away from the local churches. Pressure is put on them to conform.

You are so right: "A mill cannot grind with water that is past." The point is people need to know occasionally who put the mill there for the water to run through. I appreciate

my ancestors so much. I know they cannot get me to heaven, but they sure paved the way for me to know what and how to prepare for a heavenly home. My ancestor was Richard Curtis Jr., the first Baptist preacher in Mississippi, buried at Ebenezer Church, one of several churches he helped organize. There were many like him during his time and others who have followed with a strong dedicated Christian faith that has helped us get thus far, but we are surely losing ground.

Bonnie L. Cole
Bogue Chitto

Great needs at home

Editor:

I read with joy the front page of the Sept. 7 edition where a group of Mississippians helped to construct a church building in the area of Chattanooga. Most editions of **The Baptist Record** share the exciting story of Mississippians helping to build churches in other states and countries. I thank God for growing churches and for folks who give themselves to help build churches.

In the same edition of the paper in the "Editor's Notebook," we read how Mississippi is rapidly becoming pagan faster than we are becoming Christian. The editor gave the call for Mississippians to travel next door with the gospel.

We have churches in our own state that are growing and need buildings, but lack the finances to build the much needed buildings. They are working hard to carry the gospel to their communities and they have to meet in kitchens and hallways for Sunday School. I do not want to take away from all we are doing in other areas to build church buildings. However, I would like to see a headline that would state "Mississippians help construct church building in growing communities in our own state." That would truly bless my heart.

Don Nerren, pastor
Robinhood Church
Brandon

Look to pastor's need

Editor:

Within the next few weeks, churches all across the state will be voting on a budget. As I travel throughout Mississippi, I find many pastors and church workers very much underpaid. Before your budget is brought to a vote, be sure you have raised your pastor's and church workers' salaries. Make sure their retirement program is in order and health insurance is up to date with proper study by the proper committee.

Some pastors are hurting, while many others are borderline.

It is my opinion that the men's Sunday School Class or the Brotherhood should always see to it that the pastor is well dressed and women's groups should see to it that the pastor's wife is not forgotten.

Have a Pastor's Family Day and shower them with gifts.

I know God will bless people who take care of men and women who have been called by him to serve; and be sure to remember our directors of missions. A shower for them at the close of this associational year would be nice. There is so much that we can do to bring about Christian-love and good fellowship that I sometimes shudder for not doing more.

Talmadge (Talley) Rayborn
Waveland

Still Mississippians

Editor:

After spending almost 15 years in the ministry of full time evangelism, headquartered in Tupelo, [my wife] Diane and I moved to Baton Rouge, La., in September 1985. I have just concluded 10 years of ministry as pastor of Cedarcrest Church in Baton Rouge.

I thought I would let our good friends in the state of Mississippi know about this, because we are still Mississippians at heart. Although we have been in the mission field of Louisiana for the past 10 years, our Mississippi roots go very deep. That is amazing, since Diane is a native of Oklahoma City (she considers herself a Mississippian also).

We receive **The Baptist Record** each week and look forward

to reading all the news from our beloved state. Thank you for the ministry you are providing as editor.

Tommy Winders
Baton Rouge

True convictions?

Editor:

I am writing about Scott Hamby, who sued Walmart about working on Sunday (Sept. 7 issue of **The Baptist Record**).

I am a 75-year-old man who has been attending a Baptist church for some 70 years. I, too, do not like the idea of working on Sunday. I admire him for quitting, but I disagree on the lawsuit.

If he has such deep convictions, does he give money that goes to pay the preacher? Then he is hiring someone to work on Sunday.

I am sure there are people that he would call if he needed their services on Sunday, which include firemen or policemen. Would he not use a doctor on Sunday, or go out to eat? He is then paying someone to work.

He said he was 23 years old and under a lot of stress. I could tell him what stress is. I got news: "He ain't seen nothing yet."

I am sure a big cash settlement is better than anything in a drug store for stress.

Burton Skelton
Lamar



LifeAnswers

Ron Mumbower, Ph.D.
Minister of Counseling
First Church, Jackson

I quit going to church 10 years ago and, frankly, I don't miss it. My relationship with God is as strong as ever. Why should I go to church?

The Bible states: "Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another..." (Heb. 10:25, NIV). Very few people grow spiritually in a vacuum; feedback and encouragement are vital. The Bible and prayer are important aspects of our spiritual growth, but we also need the support and accountability that comes from being around Christian brothers and sisters. Attending church refreshes us from the previous week, prepares us for the week to come, and empowers our Christian witness. You must determine whether you are disciplined enough to accomplish all of this and seek God without regular church attendance.

We suspect our daughter had

an abortion. Since she knew it was wrong, will the Lord forgive her?

We all make choices, and those choices are not always God's best for us. There are consequences for those choices. Your daughter may not feel the consequences now, but I have counseled many women who have had abortions and all of them have experienced remorse and hurt. One of the best actions you can take is to be the love of God for her. Just as she can come to the Lord with her sin and find unconditional love and support, she needs to know that she can come to you and find the same. You can't remove the sin, but you can be the love of God for her. Since she has asked Jesus into her life as Lord and Savior, I strongly believe 1 John 1:9 (NIV) applies: "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness."

Send your counseling questions to **LifeAnswers** c/o The Baptist Record, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. Please be brief. Name is not required. Remember: in time of crisis, your pastor can make recommendations on your counseling needs.

Teen marijuana use soaring; Christian helps available

NASHVILLE (BP) — The bad news is that marijuana use among teenagers has nearly doubled since 1992, according to a federal study released Sept. 12.

The good news is that Christian resource materials are available to concerned parents.

According to the National Household Survey on Drug Abuse, marijuana use among teens rose to 7.3% in 1994 — up from 4% in 1992. Another key finding: The number of teens who believe marijuana is risky fell from 50% to 42% during the same period.

"One impetus behind the increase of marijuana use is Generation X's romance with the 1960s," observed C. Ben Mitchell, consultant on biomedical and life issues for the Christian Life Commission. "The popular culture magnifies pot without showing its devastating effects."

Mitchell described marijuana as "more deceitful than alcohol. THC (the active ingredient in marijuana) stays in the body for about a month after each use. It builds up in the brain and leads to learning difficulties, memory loss, and difficulty

thinking in general. Physically, marijuana can damage the heart and lungs, negatively affect athletic ability, and cause other problems. Of course, since it is a hallucinogen, it creates the same hazards while driving as alcohol."

Marijuana may not be physically addictive, but a tolerance for the drug builds up, requiring larger amounts to produce the same high, wrote John Long in "Marijuana is Still Here," cover article in the August 1995 issue of **Youth Ministry Update**, a monthly newsletter for youth ministers/leaders

published by the Baptist Sunday School Board.

"And it does produce a definite psychological dependency," Long, an associate in the Alabama Baptists' Discipleship Training Department, wrote.

Marijuana, along with tobacco and alcohol, are "gateway drugs" which can lead to more serious drug use, Long noted.

He quoted from an Oct. 27, 1994, study released by Columbia University's Center for Addiction and Substance Abuse showing that youths age 12-17 who use:

— any gateway drug are 3.5 times more likely to use cocaine;

— any two gateway drugs are 17.2 times more likely to use cocaine;

— all three gateway drugs are 266.3 times more likely to use cocaine.

Said Mitchell, "Churches must... teach young people to honor biblical values. Churches must also provide an alternative culture of acceptance and nurture. Drugs are like

clouds with no rain. They promise to make you feel better about yourself, but they cannot deliver on the promise. Only a genuine relationship with Jesus Christ satisfies our need to be loved for who we are."

Giving suggestions to youth ministers — most of which would be applicable to parents — Long in his newsletter wrote:

— Don't ignore the situation and hope it will go away. Be proactive with your youth group.

— Get current information so you can intelligently discuss the problem with your youths.

— Establish and enforce clear and consistent rules for behavior within the context of the youth group.

— Involve all your teachers and leaders in the information of the problem, the care, and intervention of the youths of your church;

— Form a support group of parents and teens who have a substance abuse problem;

— Pray for your youths every day.

capsules

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WORLD CHANGERS EXPANDS YOUTH MISSIONS OPPORTUNITIES: MEMPHIS (BP) — Youths can participate in a new kind of missions experience in 1996 as World Changers introduces World Tour. Combining the best of "traditional" World Changers projects with inner-city ministries in a host city, World Tour offers youths in grades seven through 12 a multifaceted approach to missions, exposing them to urban needs and ministries. Through their involvement in light construction and painting projects, World Tour participants will have the opportunity to demonstrate Christ's love in action. Moreover, participants will offer valuable assistance to local ministries and churches seeking to meet the vast physical and spiritual needs of those in the inner cities. Youths and adult leaders from participating churches will be placed in "bands" of 10-15 people and assigned to two projects — an inner-city work project in the morning and a local ministry project in the afternoon. World Changers, a ministry of the Brotherhood Commission, has involved more than 20,000 youths and adults in renovating more than 2,000 homes since it began in 1990. For more information about World Tour or other World Changers projects, call the World Changers office at (901) 272-2461.

SBTS TRUSTEES CONSIDER TRANSFER OF SOCIAL WORK SCHOOL: LOUISVILLE, Ky. (BP) — Southern Seminary's trustees will consider in October a proposal to transfer the Carver School of Church Social Work to Samford University. The recommendation for the transfer will be made by a five-member trustee committee from the Louisville, Ky., seminary appointed in April to study the future of the Carver school, said Southern Seminary President R. Albert Mohler Jr. The trustees of Samford, a Baptist university in Birmingham, Ala., approved terms for the Carver school transfer in early September, Mohler said. "We are pleased that we are able to protect the interests of our current students, maintain the focus of the seminary, and see the Carver school continue and flourish in a new institutional context," Mohler said. "I see this as a very positive and constructive proposal."

EUROPEAN BAPTIST LEADERS AFFIRM COOPERATION WITH FMB: SAO PEDRO DE MOEL, Portugal (BP) — Baptist leaders from 40 European countries unanimously affirmed their cooperative relationship with the Foreign Mission Board during the European Baptist Federation's general council meeting Sept. 20-23. In an address to the body Sept. 21, FMB President Jerry Rankin reasserted the board's commitment to ever-higher levels of cooperation in evangelism and church planting efforts, even as the numbers of career and volunteer missionaries in Europe reach record levels. A hundred delegates were convened in Sao Pedro de Moel, Portugal, for the annual meeting. Rankin and John Floyd, director of FMB work in Europe, also spoke to the EBF executive committee Sept. 21 to review the Hamburg Agreement, a 1992 accord outlining principles of cooperation and consultation between the two groups. The committee voted to reaffirm the Hamburg Agreement, and EBF's general council delegates ratified the action unanimously. Floyd told the committee the board now has 459 career missionaries and representatives working in 30 countries of Europe, with ongoing relationships in 15 other countries. On top of that, requests for missionaries are pouring in from Eastern Europe.

Just for the Record



First Church, Terry, recently held its GA Recognition Service. The theme was "Share His Love." GAs honored were (from left): first row, Kathy Brisendine, Angie Weed, Sarah Little, and Claire Ivers; second row, Misty Jones, Lacey Jackson, and Emalee Bell; third row, Shelly Ivers, Katie Little, Allison Bell, Christina Reese, and Heather Holder; fourth row, Candace Cloer, Melissa Byrum, Tiffany Holder, and Jamie Moore. The GA director is LaCresa Bell; GA leaders are Colleen Little and Charlotte Jones; Mission Adventure leaders are Isabelle Brisendine, Sue Dukes, Renee Myers, Colleen Little, Jeanelle Holder, and Connie Byrum. Gowan Ellis is pastor.



Fredonia Church, New Albany, held homecoming services on Aug. 20. The highlight of the service was the burning of the note on its new church sanctuary. The new building was built and dedicated three years ago. The burning of the note culminated the repayment of almost \$300,000 in just three years. Pictured is the building committee, Joe Herndon, pastor, and Gregg Thomas, former pastor.



Toomsuba Church, Lauderdale County, celebrated the debt-free completion of a 3,500 square-foot Christian Activity Building, the construction of a new paved driveway around the church, and the paving of the church parking lot with a special dedication service on Aug. 13. Total cost of the project was \$76,412. Members of the building committee (from left) are Charles Coker, chairman of deacons; Mel Lackey; Paula Moore, Jimmy Roberson, chairman; Carless Evans, interim pastor; and James Coulliette.

First Church, Ocean Springs, collected a total of \$1,500 during its Vacation Bible School. The offering was used to buy 200 children's Bibles printed in the Russian language. The Bibles were turned over to Bob

The Southeast Writers Association is seeking original Christian poetry from little known or previously unpublished Christian poets for publication in its new magazine, **Joyful Noise: A Journal of Christian Poetry**. Interested poets are invited to submit up to three original poems reflecting a Christian viewpoint, in any poetic style — up to 20 lines in length. The author's name and address must appear on the top of each poem. The deadline for the premiere issue is Dec. 15, 1995. To submit poems or request additional information, write Joyful Noise, P.O. Box 401, Bowling Green, KY 42102.

The Spencer Family of Shelby, Ohio, will be in concert in several Mississippi churches. They are: **Okahola Church**, Purvis, Sept. 29 at 7 p.m., for more information, (601) 264-2557; **Tangipahoa Church**, McComb, Oct. 1, 10:45 a.m., for more information, (601) 684-6601; **Leesburg Church**, Morton, Oct. 1, 6:45 p.m., for more information, (601) 854-5306.

Faith Church, Starkville, will host evangelist Moody Adams — known for the movie, "If Not Now, When?" — in a fall harvest crusade, Oct. 1-4. Service times will be: Sunday at 10:55 a.m., 5 p.m., and 6 p.m.; Monday through Wednesday at 12 p.m. and 7 p.m.; The weekday noon services include a luncheon, available for \$3 per person. For more information, call the church at (601) 323-9333.



Pleasant Hill Church, Union County, retired its building debt on July 30. The church began a debt retirement campaign in January. The members were asked to give one week salary as a sacrificial gift on July 30. The offering received was \$23,061.88. The church had a victory celebration and note burning on Aug. 6. Members of the building committee (from left) are Ann Hickey, Randy Rinehart, pastor, B.A. Teague, Ronnie Chism, M.D. White, Billy Daniel, and Larry Chism. The church borrowed \$80,000 in 1993 to build the Christian Activities Building.

The Baptist Student Union of William Carey College will hold a Missions Emphasis Week Oct. 2-6 on the Hattiesburg campus. Tim Glaze, BSU director, said that the Missions Emphasis Week will focus on ways that the BSU can help in the community. The Mission Emphasis Week will correspond with the WCC Lectures. For more information about the WCC BSU call (800) 962-5991 ext. 278 or (601) 582-6386.

Mississippi Student Assistance Professionals (MS-SAP) has been formed for professionals who work with student assistance programs. A one-day membership kick-off conference will be held Nov. 3, beginning at 8:30 a.m. at the Multi-Purpose Build-

ing on the Rankin County campus of Hinds Community College in Pearl. For more information, contact Renee Cotton, Mississippi Baptist Chemical Dependency Center, at (601) 968-1102 or (800) 962-6868; or Sonya Sumner at (601) 939-8833.

Day Star Church, Florence, will celebrate its new name, **Gunter Road Church**, on Oct. 1. The change comes from the church's desire to provide a geographical and locational identity for itself. Bill Causey, executive director-treasurer of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, will bring the morning message at 10:55 A churchwide lunch is planned afterward. For more information call (601) 932-4134. Lloyd Wilson is pastor.

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Homecomings

New Hope, Foxworth: Oct. 8; 11 a.m.; covered dish dinner, noon; 7 p.m. worship service; Howard Scabrough, Jackson, (pastor at New Hope, 1949-50), guest speaker; David Grimsley, Vicksburg, music; special offering for building and renovation fund; Kent Campbell, pastor.

McAdams (Attala): Oct. 8; 11 a.m., covered dish dinner, noon; afternoon singing; Jimmy Kettlemann, pastor, speaker.

Courtland (Panola): Oct. 1; worship, 11 a.m.; dinner on the grounds, noon; afternoon singing, 1:30; no night services; Roy Southern, guest speaker; Curt Davis and the Davis Family, North Batesville Gospel Group, the Southern Gospel Tones, Scott and Gala Brooks, guest musicians; Reuben Trussell, pastor.

Harrisville (Simpson): Oct. 8; 10 a.m.; special music, 11 a.m.;

Herbert L. Howell, retired Pontotoc County pastor, dies

Herbert L. Howell, 85, retired Baptist minister, died Sept. 14 at Graceland Nursing Home in Pontotoc.

He first pastored churches at Lebanon, Dumas, and Mt. Moriah in Tippah County. In 1956 he moved to Pontotoc County where he pastored Longview, Toxish, Algoma, Friendship, Troy, and Endville churches.



Howell

Survivors include his wife, Coy Homan Howell, whom he married on Aug. 26, 1938; four daughters, Gwen Cottrell of Atlanta, Ga., Janette Robinson of Plano, Texas, and Gail Sappington and Myra Hartel of Hattiesburg; six sons, Gerald of Lexington, Ky., Donald of North Little Rock, Ark., Stanley of Charlotte, N.C., Byron of Decatur, Conrad of Jasper, Ala., and Jerry of Columbia. He was preceded in death by one son, Dexter.

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Thursday, September 28, 1995

BAPTIST RECORD PAGE 9

Names in the News

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. (ABP) — Former Florida **Baptist Witness** editor **Jack Brymer** has taken a job at Samford University. Brymer, 59, has been named to a newly-created post of director of publications at the Baptist school in Birmingham, Ala., effective Oct. 1. He will also teach occasional courses in Samford's Journalism and Mass Communications Department, according to a Sept. 12 news release. Brymer resigned abruptly last August after 10 years as editor of the Florida Baptist news journal, citing "continued harassment" from the newspaper's governing board.

Lorena Roseberry Smith will receive the honorary doctor of humanities degree at the Fall Convocation at William Carey College on Oct. 2. Smith and her husband Dumas L. Smith are business and civic leaders. She has served on the development board of the college, and her husband has been a member of the board of trustees. Long-time supporters of the college, the couple in 1992 presented a \$264,000 gift to support the Teaching Excellence Program at Carey.

Antioch Church, Brandon, recently honored its music directors, **Donnie and Cynthia Stuart**, and their son Jeffrey for four years of music ministry. The Stuarts were presented a money tree and a fellowship was held in their honor.

DALLAS (ABP) — Kentucky Baptist editor **Marv Knox** has been elected associate editor of Texas' **Baptist Standard**. The Texas newspaper's board of directors elected Knox Sept. 12 to work with editor-elect Toby Druin. The board chose Druin, the **Standard's** longtime associate editor, in June to succeed editor Presnall Wood, who retires at the end of 1995. Knox, 39, has been editor of Kentucky Baptists' **Western Recorder** since 1990. Previously he was feature editor for **Baptist Press**, 1986-90, and assistant editor of the **Louisiana Baptist Message**, 1984-86.

GREENVILLE, S.C. (BP) — **John E. Roberts** has announced he will retire Feb. 29, 1996, as editor of the South Carolina **Baptist Courier**. Roberts will complete 30 years as editor on his projected retirement date, a longer tenure than any of previous eight **Courier** editors and a record among current Baptist state paper editors. He was president of South Carolina Baptist Convention in 1980, the only Baptist editor in the nation to hold such office in at

least 40 years. He was a trustee of the Radio and Television Commission, serving as chairman in 1984-85. He currently serves on the board of trustees of Gardner-Webb University, a North Carolina Baptist school.

Alred Foy, professor of education and coordinator of teacher certification at William Carey College, recently completed a manuscript review of the textbook, "Classroom Management Strategies," soon to be published by Longman Publishers. He was also the recent recipient of a teaching excellence grant from Carey College.

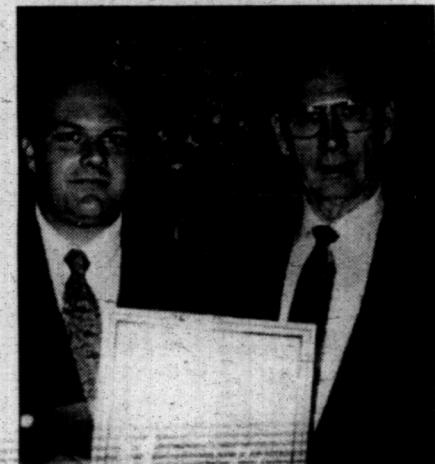
Mississippi College has announced that **Merle W. Ziegler** has been hired as soccer coach. Ziegler is a native of Wellington, Ohio, and holds the doctor's and master's degrees from Bowling Green State University. The son of foreign missionaries, he learned to play soccer in Bolivia.

Jess Moody resigned as pastor of Shepherd of the Hills Church in Porter Ranch, Calif., on Sept. 15. Moody, 70, had been pastor of the congregation, earlier known as First Church, Van Nuys (Calif.), for 19 years.

David Mein, who grew up in Brazil and served 40 years as a Southern Baptist missionary there, died Sept. 18 in Valdosta, Ga., after a long illness. He was 75. Born in Grand Rapids, Mich., Mein grew up in Maceio and Recife, Brazil, the son of the late Southern Baptist missionaries John and Elizabeth Mein.



Pleasant Hill Church, New Albany, ordained **Shelton K. Ivey** (left) to the gospel ministry. Ivey was called as pastor to Rocky Mount Church, Calhoun County, in July. He is a graduate of Blue Mountain College, and is married to Tina Stout Ivey. **Randy Rinehart** (right) is pastor of Pleasant Hill Church.



John Leslie Walton (left) was licensed to the ministry on July 30 by **Faith Church**, Hattiesburg. **A.J. Pace** (right), **Faith Church** pastor, presented the certificate.

Family enrichment seminar scheduled for Oct. 20-21

The Lakeland Center group of marriage and family therapists will sponsor "Have Your Best Year Yet With Your Kids," on Oct. 20-21 at the Harvey Hotel North on Interstate 55 North in Jackson. The conference will begin at 7 p.m. on Friday, Oct. 20, and conclude at 1 p.m. on Saturday, Oct. 21.

Christian therapists who will lead the conference include **Mark A. Simpson**, **Robert C. Rahaim**, and **Carrie L. Carlson**. Among the topics to be discussed are:

- How to be a "mean parent" and have your kids love you for it.
- How to understand your kids and still like them.
- How to talk to your kids so they will listen.
- How to have the best year yet with six simple steps.

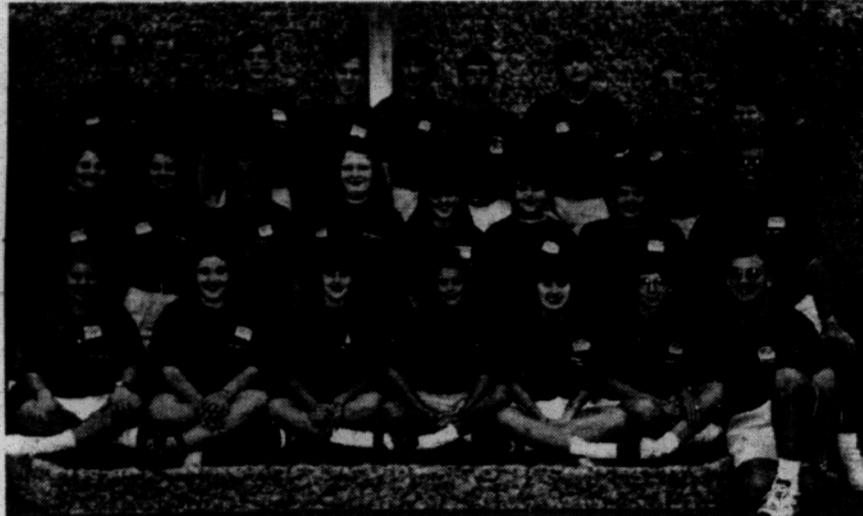
Cost of the seminar, which includes conference materials, is \$139.95 for couples and \$109.95 for individuals. Special room rates are available for overnight accommodations.

Early registrations by Sept. 29 will save \$20 on the cost of the seminar, which carries a money-back guarantee.

For more information and to register, call (601) 982-0042, ext. 7.

Crossroads' Bethel notes 150th year

Bethel Church, Crossroads (Pearl River County), will observe its 150th anniversary celebration on Oct. 22. Activities include Sunday School at 9:45 a.m. and worship with reading of church history and presentation by Mississippi Baptist Historical Society at 11 a.m. Dinner will be served at 12:15 p.m. An afternoon singing will begin at 1:30 p.m. **Jimmy Albritton** is interim pastor.



Nineteen youths and six adults from First Church, Flora, recently returned from a mission trip to Surfside Beach, Texas. While there, the group conducted Vacation Bible School and nightly youth activities for a local church. Participants — who comprised the first mission team to go out from First Church, Flora — were (from left): front row, Heather Ashley, Kelly Blythe, Courtney Irwin, Jenny Lewis, Heather Irwin, Reta Blythe, Dwayne Parker, minister of youth and activities; middle row, Lynda Hays, April Tindall, Jada Lancaster, Pam Jones, Tonya Thrasher, Leslie Ashley, Bessie Tindall, Debbie Lewis, church pianist, and Rickey Blythe, pastor; back row, Jimmy Hays, Wesley Burgess, Andy Ray, Kent Burgess, Nathan Weathersby, Nathan Eldridge, Jeffrey Lewis, Jonathan Bates, Robbie Blythe, and Greg Ashley.

Staff Changes

First Church, Booneville, has called **Lynn Jones** as pastor. He is a graduate of Northwestern State University and Southwestern Seminary. Previously, Jones served churches in the northern part of Louisiana.



Elton Cartis Tucker resigned New Ireland Church, Union, and is available for supply. Write him at Rt. 4, Box 327, Forest, MS 39074 or call (601) 625-7719.

Henry E. Hight resigned as pastor of Bethany Church, Slate Spring, due to failing health and loss of sight. He is also known as an illusionist presenting the gospel in magic.

Corinth Church, Heidelberg, has called Edd Holloman as pastor effective Aug. 20. A native of Quitman, his previous place of service was Centergrove Church, Meridian. He previously pastored Corinth Church for 10 1/2 years.

Ben James has been called to **Toombs Church, Toombs**, effective Sept. 10. His previous place of service was Mt. Sterling Church, Butler, Ala. A native of Hattiesburg, James attended William Carey College and New Orleans Seminary.



Mt. Vernon Church, Liberty, has called **Brian Hill** as pastor, effective Sept. 17. A native of Edwards, he is a graduate of Mississippi College and is in his first year at New Orleans Seminary. His previous place of service was

Oak Grove Church, Holmes Association.

Grant Arinder, formerly of Oak Crest Church, Midlothian, Texas, has accepted **First Church, Belzoni**, as pastor. He and his wife Lori are natives of Mississippi.

Corinth Church, North Central Association, has called **Blain McLain** as pastor. His previous place of service was interim pastor, Pinola Church, Simpson Association. A native of Richton, McLain received his education at Jones County Junior College and is presently attending New Orleans Seminary extension center in Jackson.

Handsboro Church, Gulfport, has called **Gregg Thomas** as pastor, effective Oct. 1. His previous place of service was First Church, Leakesville. He is the son of a Baptist minister and was reared in Fulton. Thomas received his education at Blue Mountain College and Luther Rice Seminary.

North Winona Church, Winona, has called **Terry L. Long** as pastor, effective Sept. 17. A native of Pascagoula, Long received his education at William Carey College, New Orleans Seminary, and Southern Baptist Center for Biblical Studies, Jacksonville, Fla. His previous place of service was South Lake Charles Church, Lake Charles, La.



Bovina, Vicksburg: "Five Wonderful Sundays in October"; worship services, 11 a.m. and 7 p.m.; speakers for the month will be: Oct. 1, Jerry Oliver and Calvary Singers; Oct. 8, Joe Senn of Rayville, La.; Oct. 15, Paul Perry, Lone Pine Church, La.; Oct. 22, James Busby, pastor, and Honduras Mission Team; Oct. 29, Marion Collier, Crowley.

Immanuel, Vicksburg: Oct. 1-4; Sunday, 11 a.m. and 6 p.m.; Mon.-Wed., 7 p.m.; Danny Lanier, Little Rock, evangelist; Walter Beall, Immanuel, music; Billy Brumfield, pastor.

Glade, Laurel: Oct. 1-4; Sunday, 9 a.m. service, 9:45 Sunday School, 11 a.m. worship, covered dish luncheon; Mon.-Wed., soup/sandwich lunch, 11:45 a.m. and 7 p.m.; Gene Richards, Franklinton, La., evangelist; Ronnie Cottingham, music.

New Salem (Mississippi): Oct. 1-4; Sunday, homecoming, 10 a.m. Sunday School, Burnett Caraway, pastor, will preach at 11 a.m. worship; dinner served; David Fortenberry, former pastor, homecoming message, 1:30 p.m.; revival services, Mon.-Wed., 7 p.m.

Good Hope, Lena: Oct. 1-4; Sunday, Harvest Day, 10 a.m. Sunday School, 11 a.m. worship, noon lunch, 1:30 p.m. program; revival, Mon.-Wed., 7 p.m.; Kenneth Jones, Scott County, evangelist; Nell Adams, MC music professor, music; Brenda Chennault, pianist; Parkes Marler, interim pastor.

Ebenezer, Bassfield: Oct. 1-4; Sunday, 11 a.m., lunch served, 1:30 p.m. service; Mon.-Wed., 7 p.m.; Robert Jones, Columbia,

evangelist; Wilmer Holyfield, Phalti, Prentiss, music; Donald Weber, pastor.

Fellowship, Lorman: Oct. 1-4; Sunday, 10:50 a.m. worship, noon luncheon, afternoon singing with Cornerstone Quartet, Port Gibson; Mon.-Wed., 7:30 p.m.; Floyd Riggs, Henderson, Nev., evangelist; Hubert and Hazel Stroud, Vicksburg, music; Charles Tyler, pastor.

East Moss Point, Moss Point: Oct. 8-11; Sunday, 11 a.m. and 6 p.m.; Mon.-Wed., 7 p.m.; Glen Davis, evangelist; Bobby Lott, music.

Magee's Creek, Jayess: Oct. 11-14; 7 p.m. each evening; Hardy Denham, Bible professor at William Carey College, Hattiesburg, evangelist; Linda Holmes, Magee's Creek, music; Richard Green, interim pastor.

First, Poplarville: Oct. 1-4; Sunday, 8:30 and 11 a.m., and 6:30

p.m.; Sunday School high attendance day goal, 325; Mon.-Wed., 7 a.m. and 7 p.m.; Rex Yancey, Pascagoula, evangelist; Gordon Alford, music; Bob Rogers, pastor.

Springdale, West: Oct. 15-20; Sunday, 11 a.m. and 6 p.m.; Mon.-Fri., 7 p.m.; Gary Jackson, Sturgis, evangelist; Steve and Becky Carver, Starkville, music; Tim H. Weisheim, pastor.

First, Nettleton: Oct. 1-3; Moral Awakening Revival; Sunday, 11 a.m. and 6 p.m.; Mon. and Tues., 7 p.m.; Paul Jones, executive director, Christian Action Commission, Jackson, evangelist; George C. Johnson, pastor.

Davis Road, Byram: Oct. 1-6; free spaghetti supper on Sept. 30, 6 p.m.; Sunday, 9:45 a.m. Sunday School, 11 a.m. worship, 6 p.m. evening services; Mon.-Fri., 7 p.m.; Jim Hill, Melvin, Ala., evangelist; Ricky Summers, pastor.

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Uniform Becoming a servant



By Andy Brasher
Acts 6:1 — 8:3

At the beginning, let me set the ground rules for this week's lesson: 1) Every believer is called to serve; 2) Your choice is not "if" but "where" you will serve. The Bible makes this point crystal clear. There is simply no legitimate excuse like "I'm too old," or "I'm not qualified," that can be used to deny service to God.

If my memory serves me correctly, there were some pretty good reasons given by several outstanding men in the Bible concerning why they couldn't serve God. Moses said that he had a speech impediment that hindered his ability to serve; Jeremiah stated that he was too young; and Isaiah reported that he was too sinful to serve God.

All their excuses proved to be meaningless words in the sight of God. In each case, God equipped them with the tools to serve; he still does! Service is not a matter of choice; it's a matter of responsibility. What are you doing to serve him?

Within every organization, there is conflict. This is true with the church as well. The first problem to confront the early church was internal and prejudicial. The controversy centered around whether or not the Greek-speaking widows were intentionally receiving less rations than their Aramaic-speaking counterparts (6:1).

To quote the philosophy of Barney Fife, the best way to handle a problem is to "nip it in the bud." That is precisely what the early church did. They selected seven men, full of the Holy Spirit, wisdom, and of good report to carry out the daily distribution of food (6:3-4). These seven men constituted the first deacons of the church.

In the Greek, the term deacon means "one who ministers." Evidently, this particular church order became permanent; it exists today in every ecclesiastical structure. The laying-on of the hands symbolized the importance and the special calling of their task (6:6). Even with internal conflict, the church continued to grow (6:7).

Among those seven men selected as deacons, one in particular had a unique calling to serve as an evangelist. His name was Stephen (6:8). Luke records that Stephen was a man "full of grace and power." He was especially adroit at evangelizing the Greek-speaking Jews. Soon, false witnesses accused him of speaking against God and Moses. These allegations were grounded in hostile intentions, ignorance, and spiritual blindness. Luke writes, "They were unable to cope with the wisdom and the Spirit by which he was speaking" (6:10). Stephen was brought before the Sanhedrin council, where the charge of blasphemy was repeated (6:11-14).

Stephen's defense before the council was nothing shy of a brilliant and eloquent sermon, couched in Old Testament imagery, that covertly forced the council to confront the gospel of Jesus Christ (7:1-53). The message was so convicting that each member's heart was cut to the core and their anger grew to madness (7:54).

Logically, Stephen knew that his sermon had broken the camel's back; his death would be imminent. Out of the rage that comes to some when the conscience is convicted and the gospel message rejected, the Sanhedrin stoned Stephen to death (7:58-60). The persecution of the church had begun.

Luke reports that a young, zealous Pharisee named Saul was present that day. He had been in total agreement with the execution of Stephen (8:1). From this day forth, the church would scatter throughout Palestine, worshiping in secret, to escape the dreaded persecution of the Jews (8:3). The leader of this harassment would be none other than Saul. Little did he know that in due time, Christ would personally confront him, changing his life of pride and anger into love and service.

Brasher is pastor of Como Church, Como.

Bible Book Fresh start in Jerusalem



By Larry McDonald
Ezra 1, 3

Stephen Covey wrote the best seller, **The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People**. Principle number three of his seven is "Put First Things First." This speaks of having priorities and keeping them in right order.

As Christians, our relationship with Jesus Christ is to be our top priority. This relationship is one where we the created worship the Creator. It is one where we the saved worship the Savior. Worship is where the lesser acknowledges the greater. When we keep this relationship in proper priority, we are putting first things first.

But according to Gordon Dahl, "most middle-class Americans tend to worship their work, to work at their play, and to play at their worship. As a result, their meanings and values are distorted."

In the book of Ezra, we see the Jewish people returning to Jerusalem for a new beginning. In this new beginning, we see prophecy fulfilled, worship reinstated, and celebration of their progress. As you read this lesson, consider the priorities of your life to see if you might need a new beginning with new priorities.

The Jewish people had a history of disobedience to God. Their rebellion brought the disciplining hand of God to them. Jeremiah and Ezekiel had spoken to the nation about God's judgement upon them. In giving that message the prophets also offered a ray of hope to the faithful remnant. Jeremiah had prophesied the captivity would only last seventy years (Jer. 25:11-12; 29:10). This prophecy was fulfilled with a decree by Cyrus, King of Persia (Ezra 1:1-3). His proclamation allowed any Jew to return to Israel to rebuild the temple. Cyrus is an example of how God sovereignly rules in history and how he can even use unbelieving rulers to carry out his will (cf. Isa 44:28; 45:1,13).

In returning to the promised land, the Jews were at a time of a new beginning. How would they handle this? What would their priorities be? Would they remember the lessons of the exile? We find these answers out quickly as they reinstated public worship by rebuilding the altar (3:1-2, 6). In their starting this public worship we find three principles that guided them.

First, there was unity among the people. Ezra says, "the people assembled as one man" (3:1). They had a common bond of faith in God and purpose to worship him.

Second, there were leaders whom God had appointed to lead (3:2). Not every person can or should lead. So, it is strategic for God's people to follow God's leaders.

Third, they followed the Word of God (3:2). Man's opinions come and go, but God's Word is steady and sure. It can be trusted at all times. With the reinstatement of public worship, we find the Jewish people putting their priorities in order as they had this new beginning.

As they moved from building the altar to laying the foundation for the temple, they celebrated their progress (3:7, 10, 12). This celebration was to bring praise to the Lord. This praise was not done in a dry, formal way. It was not a dull affair. In fact, it was just the opposite. There were trumpets and cymbals. The people sang and shouted. Some cried over past memories as others shouted with joy over the goodness of God. Worship was never meant to be a spectator event. It is to be participatory by all of God's people in order to express the deepest feelings of our hearts to our God.

Are you at a time in your life when you have strayed from a close walk with God? Have you been in exile? Do you need to evaluate your priorities? Are you ready for a new beginning? God is ready and waiting for you to come to him and he will grant you that new start. Remember: "PUT FIRST THINGS FIRST!"

McDonald is pastor of Castlewoods Church, Brandon.

Life and Work How do I fit in?



By Bob Rogers
1 Corinthians 12

Matthew, who is in the fourth grade, lives next door to me. This summer he came to Vacation Bible School, and trusted Jesus Christ as his personal Savior.

Shortly after he was baptized, Matthew asked me, "What can I do to help?" He understood that as a part of the church, he needed to find his place of service.

In September we studied salvation. In October and November, we will study what the Bible teaches about living the Christian life. Our lesson this week, from 1 Corinthians 12, answers the question my friend Matthew asked: "How do I fit into the church?"

Each member cannot be like the rest (vv. 14-20). Verse 12 says the body of Christ is one, but has many different parts. Since the church is the body of Christ, so it is with the church.

The first principle in this passage is that each member cannot be like the rest. Do not be discouraged if you are unable to serve in the same way as another person whom you admire. You need to find your own unique gift.

Verse 13 says we are "all baptized by one Spirit into one body." All Christians have the same Holy Spirit dwelling within them. This Holy Spirit gives each believer a spiritual gift (see vv. 8-10, 28; Eph. 4:11; Romans 12:6-8).

Verses 14-20, however, remind us that each part of the body is unique, just as a foot, a hand, ear, or eye in the human body is unique. Big eyes are usually considered beautiful, but big ears are not. In the same way, some people have gifts that put them in the forefront (prophesy, teaching), while others are behind the scenes (giving, helping).

Do not try to fit in by imitating someone else; instead, find your own spiritual gifts and fit in where your gifts can be used.

Each member needs the rest (vv. 21-26). While each member cannot be like the rest of the church, each member needs the rest of the church, for every part of the body of Christ is important.

Verses 21-26 show that the eye needs the hand, the head needs the feet, and stronger parts need weaker parts. This is "so that there should be no division in the body" (v. 25). Churches can have unnecessary division when Christians try to force other Christians into their own mold, rather than celebrating unity in diversity.

Someone whose gift is counseling should not be critical of someone whose gift is evangelism. They should refer people to each other and complement one another in ministry.

CBS radio newsman Charles Osgood told the story of two women who lived in a convalescent center. Each had suffered a stroke. Margaret's stroke left her left side restricted, while Ruth's stroke damaged her right side. Both ladies were accomplished pianists, but had given up hope of ever playing the piano again.

The director of the center sat them down at a piano together and encouraged them to play solo pieces together. They did, and a beautiful friendship developed.

What a picture of the church needing to work together! What one member cannot do alone, two or more can do together — in harmony. Each member needs the rest.

Find your place to be the best (v. 27). Verse 27 says, "Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it."

This verse summarizes the passage we have studied. The first "you" is plural in Greek (we would say "y'all" in Mississippi). It refers to the entire body of Christ. The body of Christ is more than just members of First Church, Poplarville, and it is more than just members of the Southern Baptist Convention. The body of Christ is made up of all believers.

The last part of the verse literally says, "and members of the part." This refers to the individual members who are in the local church. I am one member, who happens to be the pastor of one particular church, First Church of Poplarville.

How about you? Have you found your place in the church?

Class activity: Have members write down the spiritual gifts of other class members on note cards. Then share the cards so that each can know what gifts others see in them.

Rogers is pastor, First Church, Poplarville.

CHILDREN'S PAGE



You Shall Not Steal

Directions: Fill in the blanks below. Find the words you wrote in the blanks hidden in the puzzle. Words go up, down, right, left, and diagonally.

1. God says, "You shall not _____."
2. _____ is one way to steal from a store.
3. Keeping extra _____ when the clerk makes a mistake is stealing, too.
4. God says not some, but _____ stealing is wrong.
5. Cheating when playing a _____ steals the other person's chances to win.
6. Taking _____ from Mom's purse without asking is stealing.
7. You can steal _____ and _____ from your parents by not doing your jobs and by saying bad things about them.
8. You can _____ God to meet all your needs.
9. If you trust God, there's no _____ for you to steal.

N G S H O P L I F T I N G T
G E T A M Y T R U C R S T R
E K E E R E N G S E T U E E
E M A G A N C H M P A N S C
G A L L E O O I N S E Y R T
E S P E C M T R R E A S O N
C H A N G E I S O R N E A L

Source: *Ten to Grow On: Teaching the Ten Commandments to Today's Child*, by Sandra Klaus (Zondervan Publishing House, 1992), available at your local bookstore or by calling 1-800-727-3480.



Pen Pal Club

Hi! My name is Lacey Smith. I am 10 years old and I'm in the fifth grade. I attend Sebastopol Baptist Church. I have a brother, one cat, five kittens, and two Dalmatians. I enjoy GAs, gymnastics, camping, and swimming. If you would like to be my pen pal, please write to me.

c/o Sebastopol Baptist Church
P.O. Box 163
Sebastopol, MS 39359

My name is Robin Southerland and I'm an 11-year-old girl. My dad is a preacher and I like church a lot. I've always wanted to have a pen pal. If you are interested, please write me. I would prefer a girl, but I really don't care.

c/o Red Lick Baptist Church
Rt. 1, Box 9
Lorman, MS 39096



Only about 25% of the world's people live in countries that have a free press.

Bibliocipher

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QNCX QNC PGKF MEVF HXQG YGMCM, DG VX
HXQG UNEKEGN, EXF QCPP NIV, QNHN MEVQN
QNC PGKF DGF GS QNC NCJKCBM, PCQ YT
UCGUPC DG, QNEQ QNCT YET MCKRC YC.

CWGFHM XVXC: GXC

This week's clue: T equals Y.

Have fun with cryptography and exercise your Bible knowledge. A King James Version Bible verse has been encoded by letter substitution. The same letter is substituted throughout the puzzle. Solve by trial and error. Answer to last week's puzzle: Luke Six: Forty-Six.



GIVING IN FAITH — Like their Russian counterparts, Bulgarian Baptist churches are made up mostly of women. These members of the Evangelical Baptist Church of Mladenovo in Bulgaria endured the worst days of communist persecution. Today they enjoy new freedoms, but still must sacrifice to give and tithe. (BP photo by Warren Johnson)

Russian women build a church with their hands, perseverance

KLINTSY, Russia (ABP) — Hang up your hard hats and put away your steel-toed shoes. Construction workers at First Church in Klintsy, Russia, wear scarves, dresses, and overcoats.

Since more than 90% of the church's 150 members are women — including many who are aging — the church could post a construction sign at its partially completed facility that says "women at work."

These women give as much as 50% of their scant monthly pensions to purchase construction materials, explained the congregation's young, energetic pastor, Eugeny Voronin. But there are no funds to hire workers.

So the women do the work themselves.

Some spend more than 300 days a year on the church site — even some Sundays — feverishly hauling bricks and raising the structure as quickly as possible.

"It's very difficult to build a church with women, but we're building," Voronin said. "We try to do the work ourselves. We don't hire help."

Voronin noted the church's immediate need for \$4,500 to purchase materials required to finish

the roof. With the roof in place before the first snow, work could continue through the Russian winter; otherwise, all construction will come to a complete halt.

Located 550 kilometers southeast of Moscow, Klintsy is home to 100,000 residents — a mere town by Russian standards.

Church members expect the completed facility to have an impact for Christ on the 40,000 people in surrounding apartments.

"Many have had a negative attitude toward Baptists," Voronin explained. "They thought Baptists were cruel. So people are afraid to come to worship in small houses. But when they see this big church, they won't be afraid of coming. That's why we're praying for God to help us."

Despite the congregation's determined efforts and unfailing enthusiasm, inflation and poor economic conditions threaten to block further progress. In 1993, for example, \$1 would purchase 10 bricks; today \$1 will buy only three bricks.

Baptist Record

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